

Erosion in Rohmoria: Emerging Conflicts and Related Issues

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Rohmoria is an area most severely affected by river borne erosion is located about 20 kms away from Dibrugarh town in the upstream direction of the south bank of the Brahmaputra River. Rohmoria falls under the Lahoal constituency of Dibrugarh district which is famous for tea cultivation and its rich hydrocarbon reserves. The bank-line migration became faster in the early seventies. Efforts to get government help in combating this erosion passed through different stages of peaceful agitation and ultimately took a political character. People's resistance struggle used oil blockade as an effective means of getting government attention. Sometimes on sometimes off, the blockade is continuing for more than a decade. Oil India limited implemented some anti-erosion pilot projects with mixed results. Unfortunately, the state's response has mostly been ad hoc and geared towards temporary measures to lift the oil blockade.

Location of Rohmoria in the Map

To keep the record straight, it is pertinent to mention that the river by which Rohmoria is situated, gets its name 'Brahmaputra' from the old confluence place called Kobo where three major rivers the Lohit, The Dibang and the Siang used to meet each other. In the regional context, the Brahmaputra River can broadly be divided into three reaches- Upper Assam Reach, Lower Assam Reach and the Bangladesh Reach. Each of the reaches can be subdivided into segments. In this study, the focus of attention is the uppermost segment of the Upper Assam Reach. Let us call it Dibru-Saikhoa segment (**Figure1**).

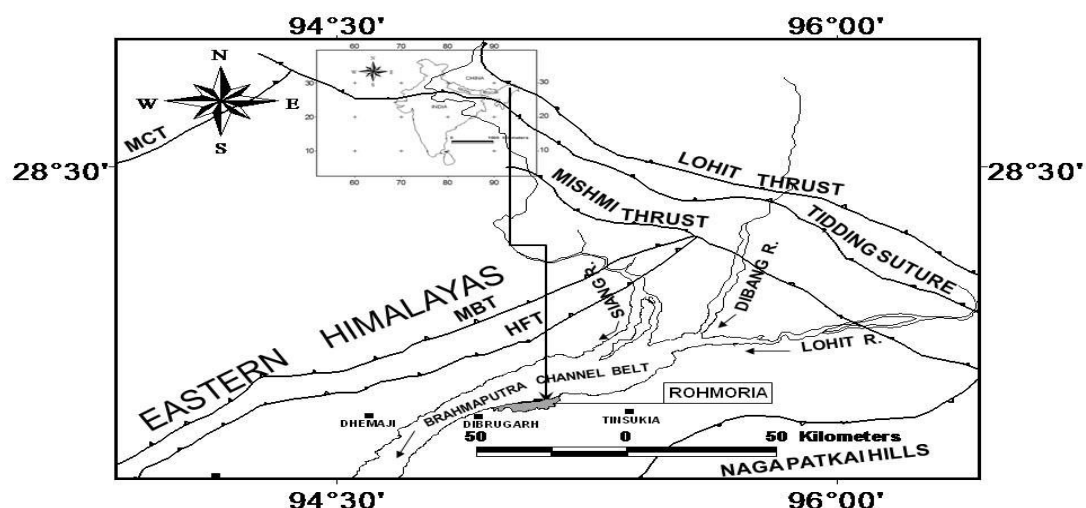
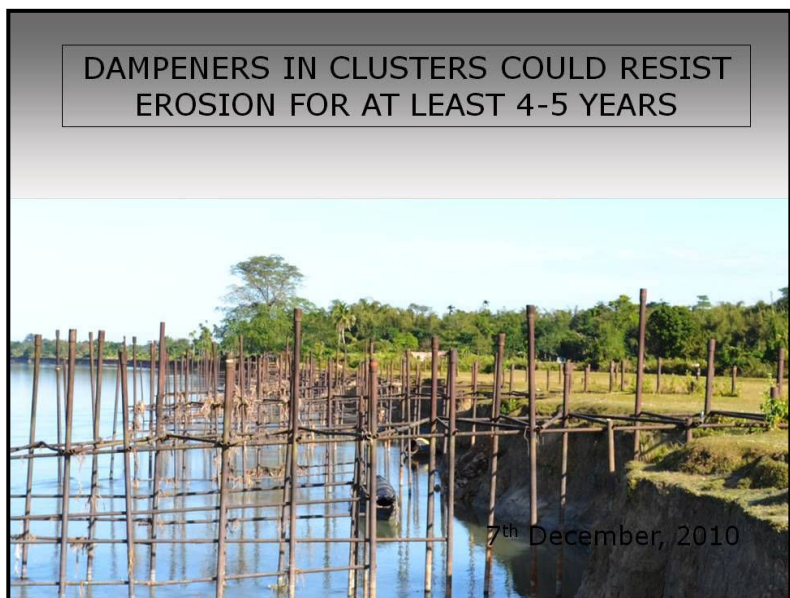
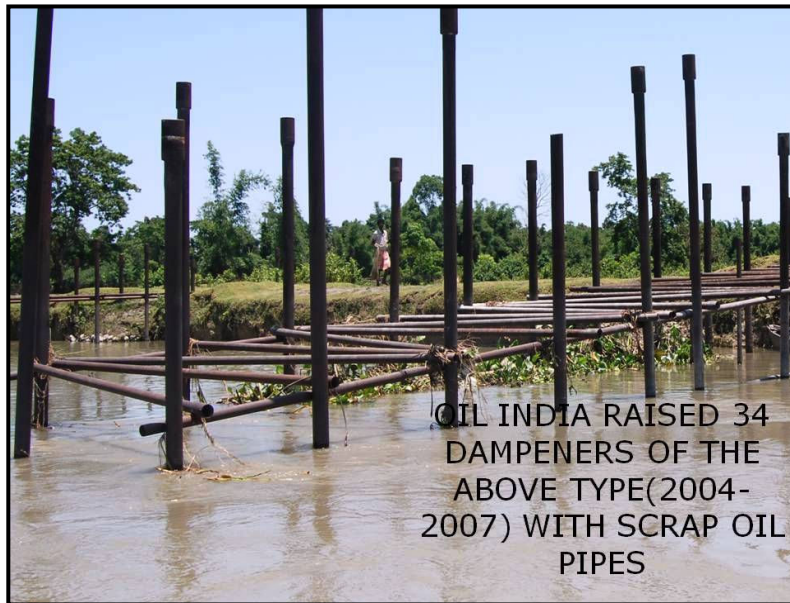


Figure 1: Location map showing Rohmoria under the backdrop of some of the important geological features. Dibrugarh and Tinsukia are some of the important business centres located in the south bank of the Brahmaputra valley. Dhemaji, a district headquarter is highly flood affected and erosion prone and is located in the north bank of the Brahmaputra valley adjacent to the NE-SW trending hills of the Eastern Himalayas. The map is redrawn in the GIS environment from the 23m resolution IRS-P6-LISS-3 image, taken on 15th December 2005.

Rohmoriam, a mauza in the Dibrugarh district is shown inside the location map (**Figure1**) for the upper reach of the Brahmaputra River. It is believed (Sarma & Phukan,2006) that in the aftermath of the Great Assam Earthquake of 1950, the rate of erosion in the south bank of the Dibru-Saikhoa segment of the upper reach of the Brahmaputra channel belt witnessed a sudden surge. So far, all over Assam, this segment had gone through maximum erosion (Kotoky et al, 2005; Sarma, 2008).

The Rohmoriam Struggle

In the aftermath of the great Earthquake in 1950, the Brahmaputra channel belt started inflating in the Dibru-Saikhoa segment causing rapid bankline migration in both the north & the south banks. By 1979, a significant portion of the Dibrugarh-Rongagorah-Tinsukia metalled road, the main link that used to connect Rohmoriam with two important townships Dibrugarh and Tinsukia, was cut heavily due to the erosion. All of a sudden, the life line for trading, business and general transportation was snapped and the earlier well connected Rohmoriam was reduced almost in one go to a hinterland, a very interior place to which most of the town based doctors would refuse to attend a patient in emergency. Peoples' grudges building up for years at the non-action of the administration to check erosion resulted into the formation of an amorphous body called "Rohmoriam-Lahoal-Rongagorah-Bokdung Baan Protirodh Samity" in 1979. The period 1979-1985 was a slow process of submitting memorandum to the district authority, sending delegations to meet the concerned minister, affected area visit by some ministers, election time assurances etc. The period 1985-1997 was a phase of peoples' disillusionment (Lahiri, 2008) at the non-action of the state departments. In the month of September 1997, in a big public meeting, the earlier body was dissolved and a new body named "Rohmoriam Khahaniya-O-Baan Protirodh Samity" was formed. This body was much stronger in its determination. This was proved by its resolve to take some anti-erosion measures of its own. Mobilising mainly people of the highly hazard prone areas belonging to 15 villages and 3 tea gardens, the voluntary body took the task of constructing six wooden spurs to divert the course of the Brahmaputra River. Some technical know-how was provided by the erstwhile Embankment & Development department of the government. Otherwise the entire work was based on the local resources and voluntary labour. It took more than four months to complete the work. However, during the peak flood of 1998, all the spurs gave way and practically nothing remained. The setback was immense.



Gradually, a simple logic was building up among the suffering masses - if a state refuses to address the basic problems of the village people, it too cannot lay its hand on the natural resources of the land. It is to be kept in mind that the old saga of nationality struggle was always acting as a catalyst for the victims to comprehend state apathy in terms of a semi colonial legacy. Coincidentally, in 1998 itself, the Oil India Limited discovered a big oilfield at Khagorijan within the Rohmorja area. Oil blockade started from 16th August 1999. This day onward the struggle took up a political character. Cycle rallies, more frequent protest meetings, big rallies and mass gatherings, technical and political workshops resulted into rapid expansion of the support base as well as the scale of propaganda. On 23rd January 2000, a state level organisation called “Sadau-Asom-Baan-Khahoniya-Protirodh-Sangram-Mancha” was formed at the end of a three day workshop from the representatives of different voluntary organisations all over the Brahmaputra valley engaged of their own to fight the menace of the flood and erosion. On 31st March 2000, Bolo Gohain, a school

teacher died under the heap of slumped soil while raising a spur. He was declared the first martyr for the cause of resisting flood and erosion.

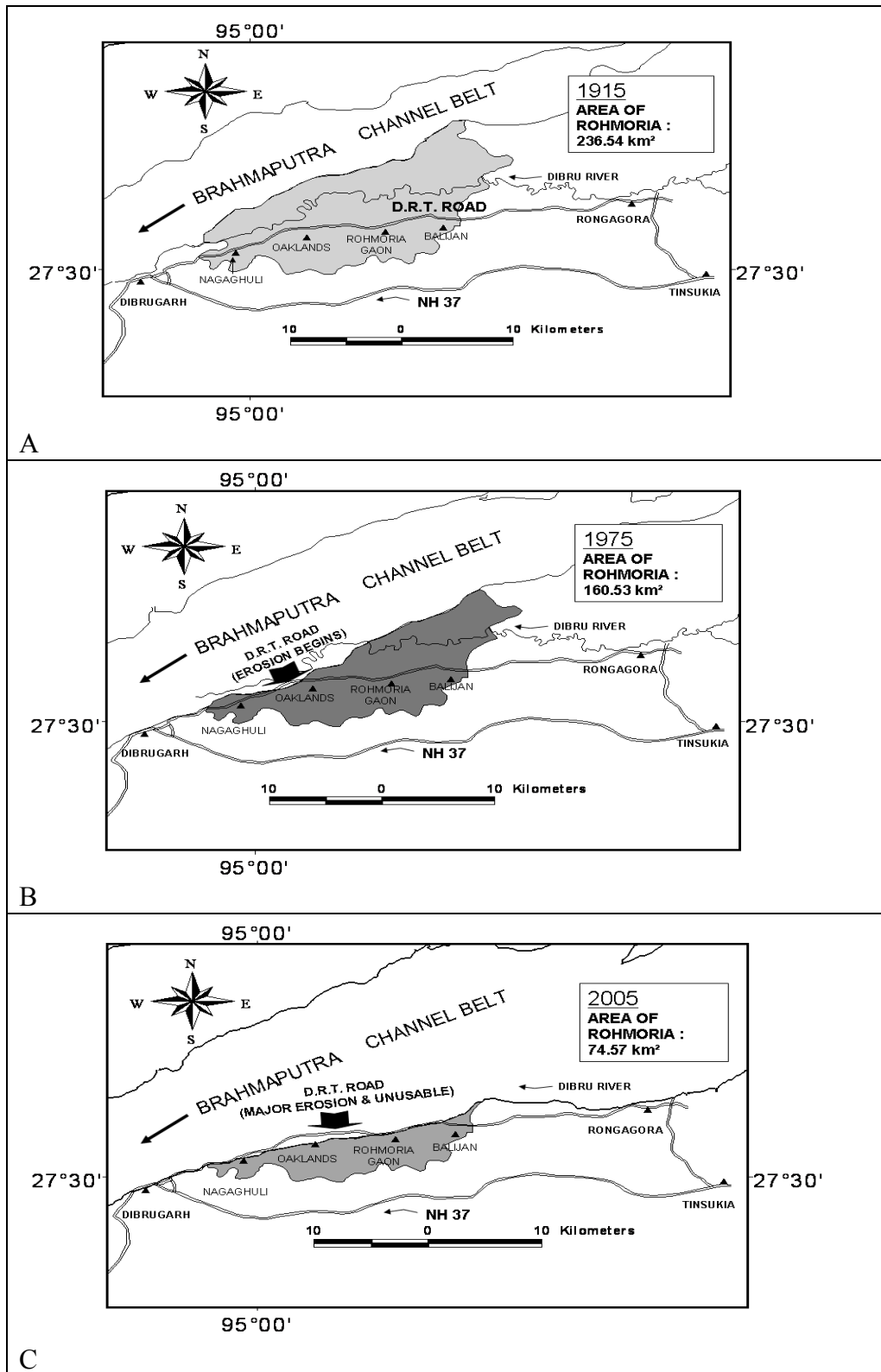


Figure 2: The century scale evolution of Rohmoria. The figure shows how the D.R.T Road that used to be the main life line for the place was gradually eaten up by the rapidly shifting bankline of the Brahmaputra River and the area ultimately becomes a hinterland.(a) is redrawn from the topographic map of Survey of India prepared during 1912-26 (scale: 1 inch=4miles) ; (b) is redrawn from the topographic map of 1976 (scale: 1cm=2.5 km);(c) is

The State Response

On the basis of the report submitted by Shri R.A.Oak, Senior Research Officer, CWPRS, Pune to find a long term solution of the problem (site visit on 9.8.2000), the 31st Technical Advisory Committee meeting of the State Water Resources Department, recommended a project of estimated amount 404.72 crores to the CWC, New Delhi for necessary approval and clearance on 24.09.2002. This included nine (9) numbers of concrete spurs, raising of tie-bund, provision of RCC porcupine with other palliative measures. In October 2003, ten (10) numbers of iron pipe based dampeners were raised by the OIL as a pilot project (DPR Rohmoriam 2009). On 3rd January 2004, the Dibrugarh District Administration convened a meeting of the representatives of different organisations as well as the OIL. A consensus was reached on the point that the OIL would raise 360 iron pipe based dampeners within a stretch of 9km (from Oakland Tea Estate to Bogoritoli village) in a phase wise manner. Based on this assurance, about four and half years old oil blockade was lifted. In 2005, Kanak Sen Deka, the then President of 'Asom Sahitya Sabha', a highly influential and prestigious literary body, visited Rohmoriam and took a resolution that if within 45 days, the PM did not visit Rohmoriam, the 'Sabha' would lead an economic blockade. In the meantime, OIL did not take any initiative as per the promises made in the multi party meet convened by the district administration. From 13th December 2005, oil blockade in the Khagorijan oil field was imposed again. The Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh visited Rohmoriam on 17th January 2006 (DPR Rohmoriam 2009). Within the period April-August 2007, OIL raised 24 more scrap oil pipe based dampeners with the help of the plan implementing agency DRDA, Dibrugarh. On 4th September 2007 oil blockade was lifted again on the basis of the assurance that the phase wise implementation of the promised plan would be expedited. On 13th November 2007, Central Water Resources Minister Saifuddin Saiz visited the erosion affected places and declared that Rohmoriam issue would be incorporated in the next five year planning and for immediate remedial measure a short term package would be declared very soon (DPR Rohmoriam 2009). As the oil production ran smoothly OIL backtracked from its promises. From 20th November 2007, oil blockade started again. On 20th December 2007, CRPF tear gassed and lathi charged about 1500 protesters who went for the National Highway-37 blockade near the Chabua Airport Base. On 24th December 2007, one day long Dibrugarh District bandh call was given by the "Rohmoriam-Gora-Khahoniya-Protirodhi-Mancha" against the CRPF atrocities. Other participants of the bandh were AASU, AATSA, AJYCP, AATASU & Motok Yuva Chatra Sammilan. During and in the aftermath of the flood of 2008, the Rohmoriam area experienced highly intensified erosion. On 8th September 2008, a procession of 6000 participants with much broader representation from many more organisations submitted a memorandum to the PM and President of India through the DC (data and information provided by SABKPSS). The 45th Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting held on 28-29th November 2008, recommended another scheme of amount 292.048 crores based on the pre-feasibility report of the Brahmaputra Board and the model study report on Hatighuli to Nagaghuli-Maijan reach prepared by the CWPRS, Pune. This was approved by the Secretary, Water Resources Department, Govt. of Assam with enhanced labour rate (letter no. DS (G) 20/2000/49 dated 12th Sept 2008) and the net estimated amount fixed was Rs. 347, 75, 70,000.00 (DPR Rohmoriam

2009). In summary, the rate of erosion due to the Brahmaputra River, going on since last fifty years around Rohmoriam was all through highly alarming but most of the state plans to check bank erosion remained confined only to paper works. Until the oil blockade started, nothing happened that can be said to be tangible in real terms (Lahiri, S. K., Borgohain, J., 2011).

Till the date, the resistance struggle reflecting the conflict mainly between the state and the people of Rohmoriam has passed through different phases and with different intensity covering more than three decades of time. A brief updated chronology of the events associated with the peoples' struggle is given below:

Table-1: A Brief Chronology of Events

(Source: Lahiri, 2008 ; Lahiri, S. K., Borgohain, J., 2011; media publication (italics in the running text of the table), data and information provided by *SABKPSS*, DPR Rohmoriam, 2009).

Time reference	People's struggle and state's response
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of the organisation "RLRBBPS"
1979-1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of Memorandum to the District Authority. • Sending delegations to meet the concerned minister. • Affected area visit by the ministers etc.
1985-1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of 'RKBPS' in September, 1997 . • Six wooden spurs were constructed under the leadership of RKBPS
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the peak flood, all the spurs gave way. • The oil India Limited discovered a big oilfield at Khagorijan in Rohmoriam. • The people of Rohmoriam dissatisfied with state's symbolic response demanded OIL's active role to prevent erosion.
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil blockade started in protest of non-response of OIL. • Cycle rallies and Protest meeting against state apathy at Rohmoriam and adjacent places. • A peaceful public rally of about three thousand people and a public meeting for the first time in district head quarter Dibrugarh (September 28th). • 'Rohmoriam' came to the media limelight.
January, 2000.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A state level three day workshop was organized by the RKBPS at Lahowal College, where SABKPSSM was formed
2000, March 31 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolo Gohain become the first "martyr" for the cause of resisting flood and erosion.
2001, April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of "Burooz" (i.e., 'Spur'), the quarterly

	mouthpiece of SABKPSM.
2002, January:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Burooz” came to an end with its fourth issue. • The process of statewide coordination also slowed down considerably but the struggle at local level continued.
2003, October:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ten (10) numbers of iron pipe based dampeners were raised by the Oil India Limited as a pilot project. • Oil blockade continued against the dilly dally approach of OIL.
2004, January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Administration played the role of mediator between the “RGKPM” and OIL • Other participant organizations were: AASU, AATSA, AJYCP, AISF, & Dibrugarh Vikash Mancha. • OIL promised to raise 360 iron pipe based dampeners. • Based on this assurance, about four and half years old oil blockade was lifted.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Asom Sahitya Sabha’ visited Rohmoriam, resolved that if within 45 days, the PM did not visit Rohmoriam, the ‘Sabha’ will lead an economic blockade.
2005, December 13 th :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil blockade in the Khagorijan oil field was imposed again in protest of OIL’s no response mode.
2006, January 17 th :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PM Man Mohan Singh visited Rohmoriam.
2006, February 21-22 nd :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “DTBKPM” was formed.
2006, September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specially Empowered Highly Technical Expert Committee” from Delhi visited Rohmoriam along with members of the Brahmaputra board.
2006, October-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 Sub committees were formed in Rohmoriam area by the “RGKPM”. Besides the local villages, six Tea gardens (Oakland, Dholajan, Mokalbari, Kamakhyabari, Thanai & Chengdhora) were incorporated.
2007, March 29-31 st .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political workshop in Rohmoriam.
2007, May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procession in Chabua. About 200 participants.

	Memorandum to Circle Officer. Protest meeting.
2007, June:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A torch light Cycle rally ('Mashal Julus') during night time in and around Rohmoriam. 500 participants. • Intermittent discussions with the administration, E&D department. • E&D department took up a scheme to put concrete porcupines (budget: Rs. 80 lakhs) near Bogoritoli area where massive erosion was going on at that time. • Oil blockade continued.
2007, April-August:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil India Limited raised 24 metal pipe based Dampeners. Plan implementing agency was DRDA, Dibrugarh.
2007, September 4 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil blockade was lifted on the basis of assurance of effective phase wise implementation of the promised plan by OIL during the dry season.
2007, September 20 th :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil India sent a very low power inept "B-Team" having no power to take decisions. The old dilly dally tactics of OIL continued.
2007, November 13 th :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Water resources Minister Saifuddin Saiz visited the erosion affected places, promised to incorporate Rohmoriam issue in the next Five Year plan and to declare a short term package for immediate remedial measure.
2007, November 20 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil blockade started again
2007, December 20 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 1500 people gathered and blockaded National Highway-37 near Chabua Airport Base. • Tear gas and stone pelting by the CRPF on the protesting people. 180 persons were injured.
2007, December 23 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A torch light cycle rally during night time in and around Rohmoriam in protest against the CRPF atrocities. 400 participants.
2007, December 24 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One day long Dibrugarh District Bandh call by the "RGKPM". Other participants were AASU, AATSA, AJYCP, AATASU & MYCS.
2008, March 2-3 rd :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political workshop in Rohmoriam.
2008, April 16 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procession within Rohmoriam amidst the Bihu festival

<p>2008, September 8th:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procession from Majjan Thakur Than to Dibrugarh D.C. Office (Distance 6 km). • Memorandum to the PM and President of India through the DC. • A protest meets in Dibrugarh town. Participants around 6000 • Among the participants, around 2500 were from the Tea Garden Areas. • Participating organizations: KMSS, GSS, AASU, AATSA, AJYCP, AISF, MYCS, GSM, Chabua etc.
<p>2009</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Party meetings of various sorts.
<p>2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh erosion. 76 families were evicted. 61 families were given 3 Kathas of land by the administration near Chabua, 2 tube wells, Assurance of houses (48,000/- per house hold) under the “Indira Abas Yojana” scheme. • 15th August was celebrated in Rohmoriam as the “Banchana Deewas”(Deprivation Day). • 16-22 September, a delegation went to New Delhi. Memorandum was given to the President, PM and the Secretary, Water Resources Department.
<p>2011,January 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The geo-fabric technology project (Rs 52.36-cr) launched by Prithibi Majhi , the then state water resources minister.
<p>2011,May-June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the official source of WRD (<i>The Times of India, June 22, 2011</i>), out of about 18,750 units of porcupines planned to set up on a 6.5-km stretch of the river bank from Gorpara to Rohmoriam, more than 14,000 porcupines (almost 75%) are already laid, and the rest of the task would take another 3 to 4 weeks for completion. • The residents are dissatisfied with the progress rate of the geo-fabric technology project and reveals their doubt in media that like earlier schemes it may also be a just a means of attracting voters before the election. • Official source said that work on the project had to be suspended from May due to inclement weather and is expected to start again from October this year. • News (<i>Times of India, June 3, 2011</i>) reveals that anomalies in works were detected at the site recently by an inspection team from CWC. • The CWC report submitted to the court said that only 50,000 geo-bags - not even a third of the targeted

	<p>quantity of 4,34,344 of geo-bags were supplied at the site till May 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining the report by CWC, Guwahati High Court issued an order to the state government to inform the court about progress of work at the site • According to the official source of WRD (<i>The Times of India, June 22, 2011</i>), out of about 18,750 units of porcupines planned to set up on a 6.5-km stretch of the river bank from Gorpara to Rohmoriam, more than 14,000 porcupines (almost 75%) are already laid, and the rest of the task would take another 3 to 4 weeks for completion. • The residents are dissatisfied with the progress rate of the geo-fabric technology project and reveals their doubt in media that like earlier schemes it may also be a just a means of attracting voters before the election. • Official source said that work on the project had to be suspended from May due to inclement weather and is expected to start again from October this year. • News (<i>Times of India, June 3, 2011</i>) reveals that anomalies in works were detected at the site recently by an inspection team from CWC. • The CWC report submitted to the court said that only 50,000 geo-bags - not even a third of the targeted quantity of 4,34,344 of geo-bags were supplied at the site till May 2. • Examining the report by CWC, Guwahati High Court issued an order to the state government to inform the court about progress of work at the site. • With reference to a public interest litigation (PIL), the court of chief justice Madan B Lokur and justice A K Goswami of Guwahati High Court issued the order on May 31, asking the state government to inform on the matter by June 27 this year.
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LOGS SEIZED BY THE POLICE-FOREST DEPARTMENT JOINT MISSION- FELLING OF TREES CONTINUES UNABATED IN THE UPSTREAM PART IN THE ARUNACHAL PRADESH



The history of evolution of the resistance struggle in Rohmoria shows that we can relate the most intense phase of the conflict with the event of imposing uncompromising oil blockade and its continuation in different stages of the struggle depending upon the response of opposite parties and the most relaxed phase of the conflict could be related with temporary withdrawal of the oil blockade given the cooperative involvement of the district administration and OIL. It indicates that the scope of dialogue within the existing set-up still remains subject to the serious pro people action oriented involvement of different stakeholders.

The Losses

Rohmoriam once happened to be a rich hub of diverse natural resources – fertile land in the bank of the mighty Brahmaputra, wonderful agricultural production, natural water bodies, forest resources, mineral resources, and the people - basically cultivators – with compatible strength of leading a self-sufficient agro-based economy, now become a vulnerable spot with an ever alarming rate of erosion. A huge residential area, agricultural land, land with forest resources, grazing land, some valuable sites of anthropological-archaeological importance with Neolithic treasure, natural water bodies, various other common property resources, etc. just wiped away by Brahmaputra leaving the remaining land and its people amidst potential threats of merging with the river. In the last three decades, erosion in Rohmoriam has made the lives and livelihoods of the affected people highly vulnerable. Erosion in the area has so far snatched away 38 revenue villages, more than 10 schools, one police station, six tea estates, one PWD road, some centre of agro-based and allied activities (official records, Chabua revenue Circle, Dibrugarh). Given the ongoing rate of erosion, important establishments such as Dibrugarh Airport, Dinjan Military Station, Chabua Air Force Base, Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) in Lahowal, the Assam Medical College and Hospital in Dibrugarh etc. will no longer remain safe.

Many of the self-dependent peasants just become landless labourers overnight due to the massive rate of erosion. A huge number of families have been displaced. The rehabilitation measures are yet to reach most of the deserving families. For most of the victims there remains no other option other than working as daily labourers in nearby areas. The female residents of local villages, who had no prior experience of working as labourers in the tea gardens, were forced to overcome all kinds of inhibitions associated with the conventional practices and accept the option. One noteworthy development in this erosion ridden area is that some of the inhabitants searching desperately for alternative source of earning besides agriculture are running illegal saw mills based on the wooden logs coming down through Brahmaputra from the upstream part of Arunachal Pradesh where deforestation continues to occur. Interestingly, the government incapable of controlling deforestation by illegal nexus, seize the logs and sell through auction to big mill owners.

Though some gross estimates of certain losses can be done, quantification of all types of losses will be a highly challenging task. Subject to the available data, methodology and related know how, it appears hard enough to quantify ecological cost due to loss of biodiversity, loss of wetlands, natural water bodies, forest resources, cost involved with the socio-cultural life of the victims specially by the displaced people, the cost of loss of anthropological-archaeological treasure etc.

An official report of a project by name “*Emergent protection measures for protection of Rohmoriam*” under the Dibrugarh Water Resources Division (WRD) which calculated the Benefit Cost Ratio of the project to be around 9:1, can be quoted in this context:

Table-2: Benefit-Cost of The Project “Emergent Protection Measures for Protection of Rohmoriam” Under WRD.

(Source: DPR Rohmoriam, 2009)

	Items	Value in rs.
1.	Two tea estates including land, plantation, and other properties.	148.83

		crores,
2.	Fixed assets of Assam Electricity Board .	27 crores,
3.	Cultivated land (63368 Bighas) at the rate of Rs.35,000 per bigha.	221.788 crores
4.	Approximately 51,899 Bighas land's production of paddy with 11.5 quintals per Bighas annually in two crops (Ahu and Hali) and at an average rate of Rs.850 / quintal.	50.73 crores
5.	Around 11,469 Bighas production of Rabi crops with 45 quintal/Bigha at the rate of Rs.400- Rs.600 /quintal with an average value of production Rs.22,500 per bigha.	25.8crores
6.	Total anticipated losses in 50 years from Ahu, Hali and Rabi crops .	3826.85 crores.
7.	(1+2+3+6)	4224.46 crores
8.	Anticipated loss per year over 50 years (1+2+3+6)/50. (Equals average annual benefit).	84.49 crores
9.	Capital cost (Rs.599129000) +Annual cost (Interest charge @ 10% of the capital cost+ Depreciation @ 2% of the capital cost + Maintenance cost @ 4% of the capital cost)	95.86 crores
10.	Annual Benefit/Annual cost (BC Ratio= 84.49/95.86=8.81)	8.81:1

The WRD calculated the cost of properties to be protected on the basis of the official valuation of different properties. These official estimates even with different limitations usually inherent in them, can throw some light on the economic justification of protecting the erosion prone area. But it will certainly be an oversimplified way of quantifying the losses due to erosion following this line of valuation of different properties.

People's Realisation over Time

The experience over time made the people realize that the issue which becomes almost the determining factor of their lives and livelihoods, is just treated as a trump card during election times by different political parties - highly used to of making "false promises" before election and to break the same after government formation. The realisation of the people fed up with such approach is that they have to carry on the struggle in their own terms.

The main focus of the conflict seems to be shifted from "Man vs. Nature" to "People vs. State". This is manifested in the nature of expansion of the erosion centric resistance struggle in Rohmorla over time across the geographical boundary of the locality to connect and integrate with similar struggles in different areas affected directly or indirectly by flood and erosion with a broader political perspective to generate a harmonic effect of the toiling masses. The journey from "Rohmorla-Lahoal-Rongapara-Bokdung Baan Protirodh Samity" to "Rohmorla-Gora-Khahoniya-Protirodhi-Mancha" and *Sadau Axom Gora Khohonia Pratirodh Mancha*, the journey from drawing attention of the local administration and civil society to generating concern and involvement of different political forces, active participation of scientific community, apolitical organizations etc. speaks a lot about it. The leadership of the struggle seems to be increasingly interested in strengthening such types of bondages with organizations having comparable goals (ASYO, KMSS etc.) by sorting out common minimum programmes of activities in the concerned areas. The *Sadau Axom*

Gora Khohonia Pratirodh Mancha publicly condemning the arrest of the RTI activist Akhil Gogoi, the leader of KMSS, the organisation – main agenda of which is to ensure the right of the peasants on the land of their possession – formed to protect the interest of the peasants of Doyang-Tengani area, who were actually victims of flood and erosion prone Majuli island, once rehabilitated themselves in the reserve forest area of Dayang-Tengani and now treated by the state just as encroachers.

From the very beginning, the composition of the participants in the Rohmorla struggle was highly diverse in nature in conformity with the diverse population profile of different cast and community – Matak, Ahom, Mishng, Kachari, Nepali, Chutia, Bihari, Koiborta, Tea community etc. The participation of the workers from tea gardens in the struggle was increasingly being felt. Students and youths of both the sexes, housewives from villages are found to be very enthusiastic participants.

This movement has helped to broaden the vision of the people. From the previous practice of getting quick short term relief, they have understood that the basic problems demand long term solution. Ecological and political issues can not be and should never be separated from each other. Besides mobilizing and reallocating resources, much more thrust is to be put to create new efficient resources. And, that is to be done in the scientific, technical, political, economic, social and above all philosophic front. Rehabilitation policy should be designed so as to cover the displaced people not only adequately but also effectively in the sense that in the post rehabilitation period they should be provided the opportunity to earn their livelihood using their own professional efficiency. If it is not possible, they should be provided adequate training to make compatible with new profession. By practical experiences, the movement is teaching the people why establishing peoples' authority on the political processes on a much stronger, active and democratic manner has no alternative.

Conclusion

Unlike the all India scenario, of all types of natural disasters, erosion borne hazard in the Brahmaputra valley is much more serious. This is due to the fact that more than 80% population of the state is associated directly or indirectly with the agrarian relationship. In floods, magnitude of losses might be great, sometimes perennial, yet temporary. The erosion on the other hand makes the peasants landless overnight. One of the most important causes behind the recent social disturbances of agrarian origin in Assam is rooted in the massive rate of river borne erosion which opens up the Pandora's Box having so many other issues which need thorough research. These are, encroachment of forests by the uprooted people from the erosion affected places to the further hinterlands, subsequent eviction of these displaced peoples by the state, pauperization of these affected people and then rapid rate of internal migration and overpopulation of the urban centers with 'unauthorized' people who lose the right to claim even the basic amenities of a civil society. The problem of erosion at a small place Rohmorla in the upper reach of the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, the peoples' struggle and the pathetic state response is a typical sample that might be fitted to many other places of the valley. It shows clearly how in certain situations ecological issues may constitute the core of socio-political instability. The energy and speed with which the state is implementing the massive hydro-electricity projects in the mountains surrounding the upper reach of the Brahmaputra valley is only seen in the war like situations. In comparison to that, even a minimum interest is not shown to understand the problem of erosion and its connection to the instability of the agrarian

society of the Brahmaputra valley. It is high time for the state to understand that prejudiced models of progress and social negligence piling up for decades may boomerang at unexpected moments with unpredictable intensities unless a really sincere effort is shown to comprehend the science behind the core issues of a place and the people therein. Moreover, implementation of all large scale projects having questions related to ecological balance should entertain healthy debates at different levels of the society.

Abbreviations

AASU- All Assam Students' Union;
AATASU-All Assam Tai Ahom Students' Union;
AATSA-All Assam Tea Students' Association;
AJYCP-Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad;
ASYO: Assam Students Youth Organisation; Union;
KMSS-Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti;
BNBPM- Brihat Nadibandh Pratirodh Mancha;
CWC- Central Water Commission, New Delhi;
CWPRS- Central Water & Power Research Station (Pune);
DRDA-District Rural Development Agency;
OIL: Oil India Limited, Duliajan;
GSS-Gramin Sramik Santha;
MYCS-Motok Yuva Chatra Sammilan;
GSM-Gono Samonnay Mancha;
"Rohmoriam-Lahoal-Rongapara-Bokdung Baan Protirodh Samity(RLRBBPS)";
Rohmoriam Khahaniya-O-Baan Protirodh Samity (RKBPS);
Rohmoriam-Gora-Khahoniya-Protirodhi-Mancha(RGKPM);
Sadau-Asom-Baan-Khahoniya-Protirodh-Sangram-Mancha(SABKPSS)",
Dibrugarh Tinisukia Ban- Khahoniya Protirodhi-Mancha".

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